

In Switzerland

The next day, June 17th, found us "en route" for Basle in Switzerland. The morning was exceedingly hot, but soon we felt the cool breath of the mountains. On our right were the Vosges, on our left the Schwartz or mountains of the Black Forest covered with the dark green fir or pine. The valley between these ranges is broad and thoroughly cultivated. One thing struck us as peculiar—we saw no fences. As on previous days we passed thousands of acres covered with vines; in fact, it seemed to-day as though it were almost a continuous vineyard on our left, broken only now and then by a village.

About sundown we arrived at Basle, and took up head quarters at the "Hotel Trois Rois" or Three Kings. Our hotel is on the western bank of the Rhine close by the bridge; our windows look out upon the swiftly flowing stream. The buildings facing us on the other side are quaint looking affairs, apparently made of drab or grey stone, with reddish brown slate roofs, and whitewashed chimneys. A little way from us on this side is one of the old gateways of the city, with its deep groove in which the portcullis rose and fell, the little room over the arch for the warder, and the wall on the river side



the narrow door and steep stairway up which he went to his room. We saw while here the old walls of the city, the extensive fortifications and deep ditches which formerly guarded the place, but which modern civilization is fast outgrowing and filling up.

Monday, June 19th, we went to Zurich and Coire. The road to Zurich is not marked with anything of particular interest, save that the mountains have been getting closer to us, rougher, wilder, higher, presenting greater contrasts with the beautiful fields, pleasant gardens, extensive vineyards, and queer little houses and villages scattered along the valley at their feet. We did not go to see the bow kept in the arsenal at Zurich said to have belonged to William Tell.

From Zurich to Coire, or Chur, the scenery is exciting. Here are the wild, jagged Alps on either side towering up toward eternal snow, down their steep sides the little mountain streams break into a thousand feathery cascades. Near us the mountains are covered with forests and tufts of fields; through the gaps we see the snow white peaks of other ridges. Reaching Weasen we cross the Rhine and skirt along the southern shore of Lake Wallenstadt some twelve miles; now winding along the shore, the water seeming almost to touch the cars; now shooting through the tunnels bored in the Alps. On the other shore, full three miles away, but not looking half that distance so clear and pure the air and water, the steep cliffs rise, bleak and bare, full of sharp points and salient angles, with here and there tufts of green, dashing streams, and foaming water. At Murg we see far up the mountain side the little cavern termed the "needle's eye" now threaded with a cloud. As we near Coire the mountains

close in upon us,—right and left, in front and rear, we seem encompassed by them. We are among the Alps, in the sharp winding valley of the Rhine,—its smooth flowing waters now tumble tumultuous blending their roar with the rumble of our wheels. The sun is tinging the mountain's brow with light, and right glad are we the echoing whistle of our engine informs us we are at Coire—our day's work done.

At Coire we stopped at the Hotel Steinbock. The scenery here is beautiful. Standing in the little balcony of our window, facing the north, we look over the meadow with its well cultivated fields toward the gap through which we entered, now seemingly blocked with a mountain. At our feet roar the drab coloured waters of the Plessur as it hastens to join the Rhine that skirts along the mountains on the west. On our right towers a huge wooded mountain, the clouds floating along a little more than half way up; between it and the mountain behind us is a deep, winding gorge; reaching from it toward the north are the precipitous slaty sides of the mountains glistening in the light and broken by frequent recesses—miniature gorges. Stretching across the northern boundary are the sharp summits of several wooded or black rock mountains. On our left is a long range of craggy peaks and rocky sides. Behind us is a densely wooded mountain curving to the south west, there forming the gorge through which the Rhine tumbles and the pass to the Via Mala and over the Alps.

As we left Basle and approached the Alps, we were reminded of our wild New England scenery. There were the same fruit and forest trees, the same kind of sharp-pointed hills, deep valleys, and beauti-

ful meadows. The very streams looked natural. Well may the mountain fastnesses of New Hampshire entitle it to be called "The Switzerland of America;" but after all it has no Alpine scenery except in miniature. It has no sharp pinnacles, no minaretted mountains, no Alpine gorges. To fully appreciate what Switzerland can do we must travel all over New England, and then, having revelled in its scenery, come here to say with the Queen of Sheba, "The half had not been told me." To-day is warm and pleasant; we see the swinging of the scythe, the bright green fields, the low-waving corn, the darker hue of the gardens, the varying tint of flowers, and inhale the fragrance of the rose as we rested beneath the fruit-laden trees. We felt at home till we lifted our eyes from the meadows, and saw on the mountains around the deep-lying snow. It broke the spell, and we realised that we were among the Alps;—but can hardly comprehend that in one short hour's climbing on this warm and pleasant twentieth of June our feet may tread the crisping snow. It brings the chill of winter into the warm days of summer.

We started Wednesday, June 21st, to cross the Alps,—and it marks an era in our lives. We have endeavoured hitherto to describe what we have seen and felt,—now thought is broken, language lame. We have seen,—we have ridden over the "Via Mala," the Rhine foaming along thousands of feet below us, the mountains rising thousands of feet above us, and we on a narrow shelf where none could pass us. From Coire to Richenau the route is beautiful, the scenery sublime, yet there is nothing fearful about it; the mountains are a little way off, the streams that rush down their steep sides making ruin as

they come,—spreading the *débris* of the mountains over the narrow valley, wiping out the vineyards and garden plots of man, leaving huge rocks with intermingling of smaller masses to mark their progress. These have done but little injury to the beautiful road we travel; and we wind along through the narrowing valley towards one of the wildest gorges of all the Alps. On our right at Richenau we saw the castle or chateau where, in 1794, Louis Philippe sought refuge from the commotion that deluged France, and for a time acted as simple usher in a school. A little further on, at Thusis, our road seemed to end, but a sudden turn brought us to the opening of the stupendous gorge opened by the Almighty's volcanic hand as an outlet for the green waters of the Rhine from the regions of eternal snow. Up that gorge we must pass, creeping along its side full 1,600 feet above the boiling stream, and the rock as many more above us yet. Taking advantage of a narrow ledge at the lower extremity, Austrian engineers have chiselled out the path, leaving it protected by overhanging rock where there was most danger, tunnelling through where it would be impracticable winding around the face, whether from danger above or smoothness of precipice below. Three times they have bridged the gorge;—and it was fearful standing on the narrow structures, looking down on the seething flood over a thousand feet beneath, and upward till the view was lost in the shelving thousands above. Talk not of sublimity till you have stood quivering there. The “Via Mala” is a stupendous exhibition of human power; it is to all descriptions of it what living, breathing humanity is to the plaster image.